



Operational Leadership

Operational leadership is the key to victory on the battlefield. In fact, US Army Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations, states unequivocally that “the most essential dynamic of combat power is competent and confident officer and noncommissioned officer leadership.” As this section’s articles suggest, leaders inspire soldiers with the will to win and provide purpose, direction and motivation in combat. FM 100-5—the Army’s keystone manual—further states that “no peacetime duty is more important for leaders than studying their profession, understanding the human dimension of leadership, becoming tactically and technically proficient and preparing for war.”

FM 22-100, Army Leadership—our capstone leadership manual—posits that the leader’s ability, knowledge, exertion, inspiration and capacity to function under stress have always inspired soldiers to perform far beyond the call of duty. As General George S. Patton Jr. so eloquently stated, “Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men. It is the spirit of the men who follow and of the man who leads that gains the victory.”

The Army must develop leaders who understand and can exploit our doctrine’s full potential. Our future leaders must be adaptive, creative problem solvers who can achieve decisive results in war and other operations as a joint or multinational team. We have inherited an incredible legacy from the soldiers and leaders who have gone before us. They established a reputation of professionalism, dedication and self-sacrifice that has made our Army legendary. This tradition of vigilance and ability to motivate, encourage, develop and guide others to achieve their full potential has been the key to US Army battlefield victory for the past 224 years.

As this section’s authors observe, the modern battlefield will place unprecedented demands on commanders. By “Being, Knowing, Doing,” the leader’s actions and abilities, coupled with professional competence and technical skills and the capacity to function under stress, will be the margin of effort that will make the difference between battlefield victory and defeat. We hope these articles will both instruct and inspire. Leadership is the key to battlefield victory.